

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE
Transcriber's Office
FLOOR DEBATE

March 19, 2002 LB 1095, 1310

and evaluation, administration, and then the teen tobacco education and prevention project. That program that we set up was hailed across the nation as one of the best tobacco prevention programs in the nation, and now here, just two years later, we are eliminating the program, in essence, because we have \$16 million yet to spend but, because the program administrators were diligent in not just dumping money out there until there was a program that could be funded and would be successful, then that \$5 million was extracted and now put into a Medicaid fund. Yes, we're short on Medicaid dollars also. But, as Senator Chambers says, we are breaking faith with the people that we established this with and I think this Legislature this session, particularly this session, are going to break a lot of promises and I really wonder what the citizens of Nebraska will say about their Legislature. I grew up and my dad always reminded me that a man's word is his bond, and actually that's what a man's integrity is, is his word. And as we, as a body, constantly, or this year, seem to go back on our word of what we will do and what we won't do or what we agree to one time, at another time we're going to change our mind, I really have trouble with that. I have trouble with that when I think about my own integrity because that's one thing I...I think I've built my business and my lifetime on, is that what I say I will do, and now we're not doing that. Certainly the Governor, I don't blame him, but he went through and took any dollars that were in any fund, and that's what LB 1310 is all about is taking any dollars that are sitting there in any fund, but this \$7 million was sitting there not because it wasn't to be used but just because they were waiting for a program to fund. But I really have great concern...

SENATOR COORDSEN: One minute.

SENATOR JENSEN: ...that we, as a body, now are saying that our word doesn't mean anything. What we say one year we're not going to back up the next year. I think that's a very dangerous precedence to set. In the 50-cent tobacco tax that I had proposed, I had funded this and I had funded the Kids Connection with those dollars. Neither one of those are funded. We're talking about a Medicaid situation in...in LB 1095. Maybe that might be mute (sic) too because there might not be any dollars